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Happily Ever After (1989 film)

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Happily Ever After

Original film poster

Directed by	John Howley
Written by	Robby London Martha Moran
Produced by	Lou Scheimer
Starring	Dom DeLuise Phyllis Diller Zsa Zsa Gabor Ed Asner Sally Kellerman Irene Cara Carol Channing Tracey Ullman
Edited by	Joe Gall Jeffrey C. Patch
Music by	Frank Becker
Production company	Filmation Associates
Distributed by	First National Film Corp.
Release dates	June 30, 1989 (Philippines) May 28, 1993 (United States)
Running time	74 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	$6.8 million[1]
Box office	$3.3 million[2]

Happily Ever After (originally released as ***Snow White: The Adventure Continues*** in the Philippines)[3][Note 1] is a 1989 animated musical fantasy film directed by John Howley, and starring the voices of Dom DeLuise, Malcolm McDowell, Phyllis Diller, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Ed Asner, Sally Kellerman, Irene Cara, Carol Channing and Tracey Ullman.[4] The film serves as a direct sequel to the *Snow White* fairy tale, wherein the titular heroine and the Prince are about to be married, but a new threat appears in the form of the late Evil Queen's vengeful brother, Lord Maliss. The plot replaces the Dwarfs with female cousins called the Dwarfelles, who aid Snow White against Maliss.

Happily Ever After is unrelated to Filmation's fellow *A Snow White Christmas*, a 1980 TV special in which continuity is deliberately and consequently ignored. Following extensive legal troubles with The Walt Disney Company, it had a poor financial and critical reception following its wide release in 1993. A video game adaptation was released in 1994.

Plot [edit]

Princess Snow White and her beloved the Prince prepare to get married following their victory over Snow White's witch stepmother, the Evil Queen. The Queen's brother, Lord Maliss, learns that she has died and vows to avenge her. Maliss takes control of the castle, turns the kingdom into a wasteland, and transforms himself into a dragon. In Maliss's absence, Scowl (an owl) proceeds to "train" Batso (a bat) in the ways of evil...an endeavor which goes nowhere because of Scowl's complete and utter ineptitude.

The next day, Snow White and the Prince are in the meadow picking flowers for their wedding when Maliss attacks them. Maliss subdues the Prince and captures him, while Snow White manages to flee into the woods and reaches the cottage of the Seven Dwarfs where she meets the Dwarfs' female cousins, the Dwarfelles: Muddy, Sunburn, Blossom, Marina, Critterina, Moonbeam, and Thunderella. Snow White also learns that the Dwarfs have left the cottage after they bought another mine in a different kingdom, but the Dwarfelles assist in taking her to visit Mother Nature at Rainbow Falls.

Upon arriving at Rainbow Falls, Mother Nature holds Thunderella accountable for not being able to master her powers correctly, accuses the other Dwarfelles of improperly using their powers, and threatens to take them away as punishment if they do not learn. Maliss arrives and attacks them, but Mother Nature shoots him with lightning, causing him to crash and return to his human form. Before leaving, Maliss informs Snow White that the Prince is being held captive in his castle. Snow White and the Dwarfelles travel to Maliss' castle in the Realm of Doom, encountering a strange cloaked humanoid known as the Shadow Man along the way. Maliss sends his wolves after the group and they manage to escape with the help of the Shadow Man.

Maliss is furious at this failure and transforms into his dragon form, succeeding in capturing Snow White and taking her to his castle. The Dwarfelles follow them but can find no way into the castle...until Scowl and Batso, still hoping to prove themselves worthy of Maliss's employ, attempt to capture a Dwarfelle. The effort backfires miserably. With access to the castle, the Dwarfelles fend off Maliss' minions. At the same time, Snow White is reunited with the Prince, who she learns is Maliss in disguise. Maliss attempts to petrify Snow White, but is attacked by the Shadow Man, whom he overpowers and seemingly kills.

As Maliss tries to petrify Snow White, the seven Dwarfelles arrive and attack him. They temporarily force him away from Snow White, but are petrified by Maliss. The only one unharmed is Thunderella, who frees Snow White. Snow White takes advantage of a distraction by Thunderella to defeat Maliss by throwing the petrifying cloak on top of him. The Dwarfelles are restored to normal while Snow White mourns the Shadow Man, believing she has lost both him and the prince. The Shadow Man arrives and transforms into the Prince, who is revealed to have been cursed and transformed by Maliss.

Mother Nature decides to let the Dwarfelles keep their powers, having finally proven themselves by working together as one, and she allows them to attend Snow White's wedding. Mother Nature takes on Batso and Scowl as her new apprentices. Scowl, who has stopped smoking and is able to breathe properly again, assures Batso that working for Mother Nature won't be so bad...until she proves to be more demanding with the pair than she ever was with the Dwarfelles. With Snow White and the Prince reunited, the two share a kiss and begin to live happily ever after.

Cast [edit]

- Irene Cara as Snow White, a beautiful young princess who is now engaged to the Prince and forced to stop her step-uncle, Lord Maliss.
- Malcolm McDowell as Lord Maliss, a powerful enchanter who seeks revenge for the death of his sister the Evil Queen by destroying his step-niece, Snow White, and her beloved prince.
- Phyllis Diller as Mother Nature, a ditsy embodiment of the forces of nature that gave the Seven Dwarfelles their powers.
- Michael Horton as The Prince, Snow White's handsome fiancé who is now being kidnapped by his fiancé's step-uncle, Lord Maliss, who turns him into the Shadow Man.
- Dom DeLuise as the Looking Glass, a smart-alec mirror who always speaks in rhyme.
- Carol Channing as Muddy, a Dwarfelle who has power over the earth and the bossy leader of the Seven Dwarfelles.
- Zsa Zsa Gabor as Blossom, a Dwarfelle who has power over plants and flowers.
- Linda Gary as:
  - Marina, a Dwarfelle who has power over lakes and rivers.
  - Critterina, a squirrel-like Dwarfelle who has power over animals.
- Jonathan Harris as the Sunflower, Mother Nature's grumpy assistant.
- Sally Kellerman as Sunburn, a Dwarfelle who has power over sunlight and has a foul temper. At heart, she is a nice and helpful individual.
- Tracey Ullman as:
  - Moonbeam, a nocturnal Dwarfelle who has power over the night.
  - Thunderella, a Dwarfelle who has power over the weather including thunder and lightning.
- Ed Asner as Scowl, a sarcastic owl who tries to impress Maliss but always fails disastrously. Because of his smoking, he is all but incomprehensible due to frequent coughs and wheezes.
- Frank Welker as Batso, a timid bat who is Scowl's only friend.
  - Welker also provides the uncredited vocal effects of Maliss' dragon form, the Shadow Man, and Maliss' wolves.

Music [edit]

All lyrics are written by Stephanie Tyrell.

No.	Title	Writer(s)	Performer(s)	Length
1.	"The Baddest"	Ashley Hall	Ed Asner	
2.	"Thunderella's Song"	Richard Kerr	Tracey Ullman	
3.	"Mother Nature's Song"	Barry Mann	Phyllis Diller	
4.	"Love Is the Reason"	John Lewis Parker	Irene Cara	

Production [edit]

The film's production commenced in 1986[5] and was done 60% overseas.[6] The American animation company Filmation had previously developed a plan to create a series of direct-to-video sequels to fairy tales which become popular by Disney motion pictures, but only *Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night* and *Happily Ever After* were ever completed. The film's working titles included *The Further Adventures of Snow White*, *Snow White: The Adventure Continues* and *Snow White in the Land of Doom*.[7][8] Some early merchandise did use the title *Snow White in the Land of Doom*.

However, Walt Disney Productions' chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg and spokesman Tom Deegan regarded the projects as "blatant rip-offs" of their properties.[9][10] This led to a lawsuit by The Walt Disney Company in 1987 following the release of *Emperor of the Night*.[9][11] Filmation thus promised their characters would not resemble those of the Disney incarnation,[12] and changed the title to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfelles*[7] and eventually *Happily Ever After*.[13] They also replaced the Seven Dwarfs with female counterparts, the Dwarfelles.[13]

According to the film's producer Lou Scheimer, black actress Irene Cara's casting as Snow White was regarded by many (including Cara herself) at the time as strangely "colorblind".[7] Mother Nature's original actress was Joni Mitchell.[14] Scheimer also noted his version of Snow White as the story's actual heroine, as it is she who rescues the prince in an inversion of the traditional version.[9] The character of Maliss was based on the actor Basil Rathbone.[15]

Release [edit]

Reportedly completed by 1988,[16] the film premiered in the Philippines on June 30, 1989 as *Snow White: The Adventure Continues*.[3] It was also released on November 10, 1989 in Italy as *Snow White: And They Lived Happily Ever After* and on June 20, 1990 in France as *Snow White and the Haunted Castle*. Theatrical exhibition in the United States was intended sometime around late 1988 or early 1989; however, because Filmation shut down in 1989,[17] it didn't see a release in the US until May 28, 1993,[18] the same summer that Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* received a re-release.[19] The four-day Memorial Day weekend taking was $1.76 million,[20] $2.8 million after ten days and $3.2 million by the next month.[14] The release was preceded by a $10 million advertising campaign and a substantial merchandising effort from North American distributor First National Film Corp.[9] In 1998, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission entered a civil enforcement judgment enjoining officers of First National Entertainment Corp. for issuing false and misleading revenue projections for Happily Ever After, improperly trading stock based on undisclosed information, and failing to meet required reporting obligations. [21][22]"

Home media [edit]

Happily Ever After was issued on VHS and LaserDisc by Worldvision and later on DVD (in an edit censoring some violence) by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment. In 2007, BCI Eclipse released a storybook-themed DVD set with *Happily Ever After*, *Journey Back to Oz*, and another "Snow White" sequel film, *A Snow White Christmas*. This release contains the uncut version of the film, but due to it being taken from a PAL master copy, the film's speed and sound pitch are raised by 4%.

As of 2016, the rights to the film are owned by Universal Pictures through DreamWorks Animation under their ownership of DreamWorks Classics, which holds much of the Filmation catalog.[23]

Reception [edit]

Despite a substantial advertising campaign and having been expected to become "one of the biggest hits of the year," *Happily Ever After* performed poorly in the box office during its theatrical run.[12] Its domestic gross was only $3,299,382.[2]

It received generally negative reviews. According to Stephen Holden of *The New York Times*, "visually, *Happily Ever After* is mundane. The animation is jumpy, the settings flat, the colors pretty but less than enchanting. The movie's strongest element is its storytelling, which is not only imaginative but also clear and smoothly paced."[24] Kevin Thomas of *Los Angeles Times* opined the characters (especially the Prince) were "bland" and called the film's songs "instantly forgettable."[25] Rita Kemple of *The Washington Post* derided the "inane" humor attempts as well as "badly drawn characters" and their "clumsy" animation.[26] *Desert News*' Chris Hicks similarly wrote: "Sadly, the animation here is weak, the gags even weaker and the story completely uninvolving."[27] Steve Daly of *Entertainment Weekly* gave the film a score of F and recommended to "give this Snow White the big kiss-off."[28] *Chicago Tribune*'s Mark Caro wrote that the comparison with Disney's classic *Snow White* "couldn't be more brutal."[29] The film currently has a 40% approval rating based on 10 reviews on Rotten Tomatoes, with an average rating of 5.9/10.[30] Jerry Beck's *The Animated Movie Guide* gave it zero stars, citing a "rushed" look, convoluted plot, "mundane" action, mediocre animation, and "wasted" star voice cast, contrasting it with the "wit, charm, and heart" of the Disney film.[31]

Other reviews were more positive. Jeff Shannon of *Seattle Times* opined that "this one's a cut above in the animation contest, deserving attention in the once-exclusive realm of Disney and Don Bluth. It almost, but not quite, escapes those nagging comparisons."[32] Ralph Novak of *People* wrote that although "the animation is less sophisticated than the Disney standard," the story "moves nicely, though," with a "colorful" cast of voices.[33] Candice Russell of *Sun-Sentinel* called it "a sweet and likable film," crediting a screenplay "that avoids cuteness and sentimentality and remembers that kiddie fare is fun" and "a few charming songs adding to the merriment."[34]

Video game [edit]

Main article: Snow White: Happily Ever After (video game)

An unreleased Nintendo Entertainment System video game was planned in 1991.[35][36] A Sega game was also considered in 1993.[9] An eventual Super Nintendo Entertainment System version was developed by ASC Games and released by Imagitec Design four years later (and one year after the film's release) in 1994.

Notes [edit]

1. ^ Also known as ***Snow White: Happily Ever After*** and ***Happily Ever After: Snow White's Greatest Adventure***.

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External links [edit]

1980s portal

- Official website (Special Edition DVD)
- *Happily Ever After* at IMDb
- *Happily Ever After* at Rotten Tomatoes

V · T · E **"Snow White" by the Brothers Grimm** [hide]

"Gold-Tree and Silver-Tree" · "Snow-White-Fire-Red" · "Richilde" · "The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights" · "Nourie Hadig" · "Myrsina" · "Bella Venezia" · Disney franchise

Characters	Snow White (Snow White (Disney)) · The Queen (Evil Queen (Disney) · Queen of Fables) · The Seven Dwarfs · Prince Charming
Objects	Magic Mirror
Films	*Snow White* (1902) · *Snow White* (1916) · *Betty Boop in Snow-White* (1933) · *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) · *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (1943) · *The Seven Dwarfs to the Rescue* (1951) · *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1955) · *Snow White and the Three Stooges* (1961) · *Snow White* (1961) · *The New Adventures of Snow White* (1969) · *A Snow White Christmas* (1980) · *Neberte nám princeznú* (1981) · *Snow White* (1987) · ***Happily Ever After*** (1989) · *The Magic Riddle* (1991) · *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (1997) · *Snow White: The Fairest of Them All* (2001) · *7 Dwarves – Men Alone in the Wood* (2004) · *7 Dwarves: The Forest Is Not Enough* (2006) · *Snow White: The Sequel* (2007) · *Sydney White* (2007) · *Happily N'Ever After 2: Snow White—Another Bite @ the Apple* (2009) · *Blanche Neige* (2009) · *Grimm's Snow White* (2012) · *Mirror Mirror* (2012) · *Blancanieves* (2012) · *Snow White: A Deadly Summer* (2012) · *Snow White: The Power of Dwarfs* (2014) · *The Seventh Dwarf* (2014) · *Red Shoes and the Seven Dwarfs* (2019) · *In the Mirror* (2020) · *Snow White* (2025) · *The Death of Snow White* (2025)
***The Huntsman* film series**	*Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) (soundtrack) · *The Huntsman: Winter's War* (2016)
Other film references	*Shrek* (2001) · *Happily N'Ever After* (2007) · *Shrek the Third* (2007) · *Xuxa em O Mistério de Feiurinha* (2009) · *Descendants* (2015) · *Charming* (2018)
Television series	*The 10th Kingdom* (miniseries) · *The Charmings* (sitcom) · *White Snow* (1995) · *The Legend of Snow White* (anime series) · *Prétear* (anime series) · *Once Upon a Time* (drama series) · "Four Great Women and a Manicure" (*The Simpsons* episode) · *The 7D* (TV series)
Stage	*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1912 play) · *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (musical) · *A Snow White Christmas* (musical)
Ballet	*The Magic Mirror* (1903)
Other media	*Fables* (comics) · *Mira, Mirror* (novel) · *Mirror Mirror* (novel) · *Red as Blood* (short story) · *Schneewittchen* (opera) · Seven Dwarfs Mine Train (attraction) · Snow White's Enchanted Wish (attraction) · Snow White Grotto (attraction) · *Snow White: Happily Ever After* (video game) · "Snow, Glass, Apples" (short story) · *The Serpent's Shadow* (novel) · *Fairest* (novel) · *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (short story collection) · *Amada Anime Series: Super Mario Bros.* (OVA) · *Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep* (video game) · *Fairytale Fights* (video game) · *Snow White with the Red Hair* (manga) · *RWBY* (TV series) · *The Wolf Among Us* (video game) · *Dark Parables* (video game) · *Six-Gun Snow White* (novel)
Non-media	Snow White Cafe

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